

Joel Katz has served in my Washington office helping the legislative staff meet its deadlines and achieve our goals. His hard-work, commitment to getting the job done and dependability made a huge difference to me and to the constituents he served.

Kenya Cox has an incredible dedication to many causes that have benefitted our district and the entire state. I appreciate her dogged and persistent work ethic in response to constituent requests. Her commitment to resolving problems and her tenacity in getting the job done well is admirable.

Andy Purath has served me in Washington for the last year as a congressional military fellow. I appreciate his hard work in the legislative office and his willingness to serve our country.

Mariam Bell has helped us complete the archive process on deadline and has been a blessing to Vicki and me for many years. I am thankful for her thoughtful approach to handling an enormous task.

I want to also recognize staff who have previously worked for me: Dave Hanna, Matthew Schlapp, Ruth Richman, Karen Casto, Tamara Baker, Gwendolyn Caldwell, Ardena Schienbein, Cindy Gustafson, Pam Porvaznik, Russ Yost, Scott Margolius, Judy Patton, Melissa Beall, Matt Rowden, Brad Ayers, Hannah Woody, Kevin Bruce, Amy Skeen, Amy Butler, Jennilee Browning, Jamie Sauser, Scott Plecs, Timon Oujiri, Aaron Weiss, John Howland, John Brady, Elias Voces, Joan Smutko, Trisha Reagan, Monica Green, Cindy Black, Emily Wellman, Jason Moshier, Courtney English, Joey Rathbone, Chris Israel, Joe Cramer, Sarah Key Sunday, Doddie Bowman, Terry Horton, Amy Lorenzini, Cheryl Arensdorf, Katie Steers, Jenni Schallenkamp, Tiffany Keeler, Nicole Noble, Don Boleski and Arsalan Arif. Without the years of service these people gave, I would not have been able to accomplish so much.

I would like to thank the staff on the House Appropriations Committee that have aided me tremendously through the years: Jeff Shockey, Debbie Weatherly, Dave LesStrang, Steve Crane, Stephanie Meyers, Kevin Jones, Stephen Sepp, Liz Dawson, David Gibbons, Mike Ringler, Ben Nicholson, John Martens, Martin Delgado, Allison Deter, Jennifer Hing, Jenny Kisiah, Frank Cushing, Letitia White, John Shank, Tom Rice, Michelle Mrdozza, Migo Micconi, Ben Nicholson, Jennifer Miller, Dena Baron, Michael Stephens, Delia Scott, Chris Topik, Greg Knadle, Beth Houser, Rob Nabors, Cheryl Smith, David Reich, Nicole Kunko, John Bartrum, Tammy Hughes and Sandy Farrows.

I also want to acknowledge and thank the staff I have worked with on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Mike Meermans, John Stopher, Kathleen Reilly, Meghann Courter, Fred Fleitz and Courtney Littig.

To all of my Congressional colleagues I have worked with over the years: it has been an honor to serve alongside you. Thank you for your friendship and your dedication to our great country.

My family and I deeply appreciate all our supporters and friends who have lifted us up in prayer and those who have given so much to make the impossible happen. For the past 16 years as I traveled to work and saw the Capital dome in the morning, I would pray, "Lord, help me do the right thing."

God has answered that prayer by surrounding me with a family and staff who, along with thousands of friends and supporters, have helped me faithfully carry out my responsibilities.

In the coming months and years, many tough decisions will be made in terms of what we do as a country. The success of our nation depends on engaged citizens who believe, as our Founding Fathers did, that the government should be by the people and for the people. We must all remain in the fight to help make Kansas and our country stronger, more prosperous and an even better place to raise a family.

Vicki and I look forward to continuing that journey with all those who have so faithfully walked with us.

While there are numerous other people that could be mentioned, I again want to say what an honor it has been to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives on behalf of the people of Kansas who sent me here these past 16 years.

May God continue to bless the Great State of Kansas, and may God bless America.

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL REPEAL ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2965, the Don't Ask Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010. This will be the second time this year that the House votes to repeal the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Opponents of repeal are out of touch with the American people, out of touch with the American military, and out of excuses. For years, Republicans in the House and Senate have claimed that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would threaten unit cohesion. America's troops and military leaders disagree. In the Pentagon's comprehensive review of this issue, 70 percent of service members surveyed believed that repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" would have no negative effect on the performance of their units. The military's top leaders, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen—both appointed by President Bush—have strongly advocated for repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

At a time when our military is fighting two wars, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is hampering our Armed Forces, and harming our national security. According to a GAO report, the military had discharged over 750 mission-critical service members by 2003 because of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," including over 320 service members with language skills—such as Arabic and Pashto—that are critical to our success in Iraq and Afghanistan. As reported by the Washington Post, there are an estimated 66,000 gay Americans currently serving in the military; that's 66,000 American troops who could be discharged tomorrow simply because they are gay.

Mr. Speaker, today I will vote to end a policy of open discrimination against a group of courageous Americans—men and women who

proudly serve in the Armed Forces and put their lives on the line to defend our country. For thousands of gay and lesbian veterans who have been discharged from the military over the years, Congress has acted too late. Nonetheless, it is time to honor their service by providing a new generation of patriotic gay and lesbian Americans the opportunity to serve our country proudly and openly.

I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 2965, and I call upon Members of the Senate to do the right thing by repealing this destructive policy once and for all.

HONORING BLAKE GOETZ

HON. MARY BONO MACK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 17, 2010

Mrs. BONO MACK. Madam Speaker I rise today to honor a very distinguished member of my community, Fire Chief Blake Goetz.

Today I wish to recognize Fire Chief Blake Goetz, who has dedicated 33 years of service to the City of Palm Springs and over 29 years to the Palm Springs Fire Department. He will retire from his position as Fire Chief on December 31, 2010, and I am pleased to rise to make a few remarks on his impressive accomplishments and many contributions to the City of Palm Springs.

Chief Goetz started his career with the Palm Springs Fire Department in 1981. Over the years, Chief Goetz has remained committed to safeguarding our community and has greatly increased the Coachella Valley's preparedness for fires, earthquakes and floods. Goetz initiated the Palm Springs Fire Department's Fire Prevention Safety Program to spread awareness of the dangers of fire and fire-related hazards to local grade schools during Fire Protection Week. His work in developing the Palm Springs Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) brought this critically important program to our area, and has greatly enhanced our local community's ability to respond to disaster. Goetz was appointed Fire Chief in 2004, and has continued to be an outstanding public safety official and well-respected leader in the community.

In addition to his time at the Palm Springs Fire Department, Chief Goetz has committed himself to the safety and well-being of the people of the Coachella Valley in many other areas. As a certified emergency manager with the International Association of Emergency Managers from 1998 to 2008, Chief Goetz played an essential role in bringing the Coachella Valley Emergency Managers Association to our community. Goetz has served as a member of the board of directors of Southern California Emergency Services Association and is currently chair of the board of directors of the Palm Springs Federal Credit Union. Goetz holds a lifetime instructor credential in fire science for California Community Colleges, and I am confident that he will continue his efforts towards promoting safety and protecting others after his retirement.

Today I stand proud to honor the admirable accomplishments of Fire Chief Blake Goetz, and extend my sincere appreciation for his distinguished service to the Palm Springs Fire Department and the Coachella Valley.